Common Lilac
Common Lilac  
*(Syringa vulgaris)*

**General Description**
A medium to large hardy shrub with stout, spreading branches developing a somewhat oval to irregularly rounded crown. Spreads by suckering. Showy, fragrant flowers.

**Leaves and Buds**
Bud Arrangement - Opposite.
Bud Color - Green to brownish-purple with 3 pairs of scales.
Bud Size - Sessile, subglobose, large, 1/4 to 1/2 inch.
Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, cordate.
Leaf Margins - Entire, smooth.
Leaf Surface - Smooth, leathery.
Leaf Length - 2 to 5 inches.
Leaf Width - 1½ to 3½ inches.
Leaf Color - Dark green.

**Flowers and Fruits**
Flower Type - Perfect, fragrant, borne in large terminal panicles, singles and doubles.
Flower Color - White to purple, a variety of colors.
Fruit Type - Woody capsule. Flat tannish seeds.
Fruit Color - Smooth, brown.

**Form**
Growth Habit - Upright leggy shrub with irregular outline.
Texture - Medium-coarse, summer; medium-coarse, winter.
Crown Height - 8 to 12 feet.
Crown Width - 6 to 12 feet.
Bark Color - Young bark is green-brown, older bark is gray-brown.
Root System - Shallow, dense.

**Environmental Requirements**

**Soils**
Soil Texture - Adapted to a wide variety of soils.
Soil pH - pH is 5.5 to 8.0.
Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G, 7, 8, 9C, 9L.

**Cold Hardiness**
USDA Zone 2.

**Water**
Drought tolerant, does not withstand ponding.

**Light**
Full sun.

**Uses**

**Conservation/Windbreaks**
Medium to tall shrub for farmstead windbreaks and highway beautification. Occasionally used in field windbreaks.

**Wildlife**
Little value for fruit or browse. May be of value for nesting by songbirds.

**Agroforestry Products**
Floral design - Fragrant cutflowers.

**Urban/Recreational**
Good for shelter, shrub borders, massing in parks, and screen plantings.

**Cultivated Varieties**
Hundreds of cultivars/ clones of varying flower types and colors.

**Related Species**
Chinese Lilac *(Syringa x chinensis)* - Excellent lavender flowers, merits use in farmstead windbreaks, 5 to 7 feet hedges or screens, or specimen shrub.
Late Lilac *(S. villosa)*
Miss Kim Lilac *(S. patula ’Miss Kim’)* - Very dense, rounded form, pink flowers, slow-growing to 10 to 12 feet.
Palibin Dwarf Lilac *(S. meyeri ’Palibin’) (syn. Korean Dwarf Lilac)* - Similar to Miss Kim but grows 6 to 7½ feet tall.

**Pests**
Common diseases include powdery mildew. Common lilac is a host of ash yellows, but the impact is not known. Common insect pests include lilac borer. Extracts from *Syringa* species are toxic to insect pests.